

HOMER WARD

ON DEC 7 1941 I WAS ON BOARD THE U.S.S. OKLAHOMA IN PEARL HARBOR.

I WAS ON THE 3rd DECK BELOW ON THE STARBOARD SIDE, I WAS IN THE 6th DIVISION AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN ON THE PORT SIDE (THE SIDE THE TORPEDOES HIT ON). SOME OF US HAD TO SLEEP ON THE STARBOARD SIDE BECAUSE OF LACK OF ROOM.

I WAS SHINING MY NEW SHOES AND GETTING CHRISTMAS CARDS READY TO MAIL HOME. SOMEONE GOT ON THE P.A. SYSTEM AND SAID GENERAL QUARTERS, ALL HANDS MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS, THIS IS NO DRILL THE JAPS ARE BOMBING HELL OUT OF US. I WENT UP 3 FLIGHTS OF STAIRS AND HALF WAY UP THE UP THE FOREMAST WHERE MY BATTLE STATION WAS (I WAS SKY LOOKOUT FOR ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS). I SAW A PLANE COMING IN SO CLOSE TO THE SHIP I COULD SEE HIS MOUSTACHE. BY THIS TIME SOMEONE WAS HOLLERING ABANDON SHIP. I CAME DOWN THE STAIRS HOLDING ONTO THE RAILING, THEN I WENT UP AND OVER THE STARBOARD SIDE. I RODE THE SHIP OVER UNTIL IT GOT TO WHERE I COULD WALK DOWN THE SIDE, THE LINES FROM THE MARYLAND TO US WERE STRETCHING TO THE BREAKING POINT. MANY SAILORS WERE TRYING TO HAND WALK THE ROPES TO THE MARYLAND AND AND FALLING IN THE WATER. THE SHIP WENT OVER IN SLOW MOTION, IT JUST STOPPED FOR A WHILE AND I DECIDED NOT TO JUMP I CANT SWIM GOOD AND DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE MY NEW SHOES.

THE SHIP TOOK ANOTHER ROLL SO I KICKED MY SHOES OFF AND JUMPED IN. I DIDNT HAVE FAR TO SWIM BUT THERE WERE LOTS OF PEOPLE IN THE WATER AND I HAD TO WAIT MY TURN TO GET OUT, A MAN I KNEW MADE IT UP ON THE BILGE AND I ASKED HIM TO EHLP ME GET OUT OF THE WATER, HE REFUSED AND RAN DOWN THE BILGE. I MADE IT TO THE BILGE ON THE MARYLAND AND THEN CLIMBED A ROPE UP TO THE FOC'SLE DECK THEN I REPORTED TO THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY AND HELPED WITH FIRING UNTIL IT WAS OVER. WE DON'T KNOW IF WE HIT ANYTHING OR NOT.

A MOTOR LAUNCH WS SENT OVER TO GET THOSE WHO WERER NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE MARYLAND, THEEY TOOK U TO FORD ISLAND, GAVE US SOME CLOTHES. THEY BROUGHT SAILORS IN COVERED WITH OIL AND BURNED, THEY PILED THEM UP AGAINST THE WALL, AS WE PASSED BY TEHY WOULD SAY KILL ME, KILL ME. THIS IS THE WORST THING I SAW DURING THE WAR.

WE STAYED AT THE AMMUNITION DEPOT FOR A FEW DAYS, THEN TEHY PUT US ON SHIPS IN THE HARBOR THAT COULD TAKE US. I WAS PLACED ON THE HEAVY CRUISER U.S.S. LOUISVILLE. WE SPENT SEVERAL YEARS IN THE BATTLE ZONE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC. THE RESULTS OF THAT IS WITH ME, EVEN TODAY